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Reporting on 162 second-chance students, the investigator found that 36% succeeded in the junior college, that most of the successful ones did not come directly to the junior college after dismissal from the first institution, that high school class rank was the best single indicator of success of second-chance students, that the grade point average for the first semester at the junior college is the best single indicator of long-range success, that achievement test scores taken in high school have value for identification of the late bloomer, that over half the sample studied left at the end of the first semester, that the successful students attributed their success to the fact that they were now older, more mature, and knew what they wanted. The report recommends mandatory pre-admission counseling for all high-risk students (to include extensive testing), evaluation of student personnel programs, and more training for junior college counselors. (JC)

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THE SALVAGE FUNCTION IN THE JUNIOR COLLEGE

MYTHS AND ACTUALITIES

Elizabeth Berry

JC 690 127

In junior college circles, frequent reference is made to the salvage function. Although this phrase has different meanings to different people, it is sometimes used in referring to those students who go directly from high school to a four year college or university, are dismissed for failure to obtain a satisfactory grade point average, and then seek admission to their local junior college, where they are admitted and given a second chance. Although junior college administrators often pride themselves on their accomplishments with individual members of this particular group, the truth of the matter is that very little is known about these students, or how many of them do actually succeed when given a second chance. A scanning of the literature reveals that there is a dearth of scholarly information on this important topic. Although a few of these students may have been victims of circumstances beyond their control, it is obvious that most of them graduated from high school and went off to college unrealistic and

immature. Because of a long and continued interest in the underachiever or late bloomer, this writer recently completed an exploratory study of second chance students to determine what could be learned that would be of value in planning for others like them in the years ahead.

NATURE OF THE SAMPLE

During the 1964-65 school year, 162 of these second chance students were admitted to the day school program at Metropolitan Junior College, Kansas City, Missouri. At the time of this study, this junior college had no program of admissions counseling or advisement designed especially for them. They were admitted to the college, informed that they were admitted on probation, and advised that they should seek help from one of the college counselors. Like all other students at the college, a faculty advisor assisted them with enrollment and program planning. Otherwise it was "up to them."

PROCEDURES

This study had no predetermined set of questions to which answers were sought. Rather, it was hoped that a descriptive study would bring together a mass of data that would yield important clues useful in admitting and/or counseling

the second chance student. A profile was assembled on each of the 162 students. Information was obtained from the following sources: the junior college application for admission, the high school transcript, the transcript from the first college attended, the cumulative record while they were enrolled at the junior college, and a follow-up post card one year after they withdrew from Metropolitan Junior College to determine what they were doing at that time. In order to acquire a better understanding of these students as individuals, this writer also conducted tape recorded interviews with each of the 162 original students who was still enrolled during the spring semester of 1965-66.

FINDINGS

From the 162 profiles assembled on these students, it was necessary to make comparisons on each piece of descriptive information to determine what significant patterns emerged. Findings of this study with some possible implications were as follows:

1. Fifty-nine of the 162 second chance students succeeded in their studies at Metropolitan Junior College. This is 36 per cent. For the purposes of this study, a student was considered successful if he obtained a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale for all semester hours

attempted at Metropolitan Junior College.

2. Of the 162 students, there were 132 men and 30 women. Probable reasons for the preponderance of men are (1) Men feel a greater pressure to continue in college for society expects them to be the chief wage earner, (2) Most of these men came from middle class homes where the parents encouraged them to enter professions or white collar jobs requiring a college degree, and (3) Except for physical disability, college attendance was the only way for many of these men to postpone or avoid compulsory military service. The ratio of success for men and women was about the same.

3. Chart I shows the high schools these students had attended correlated with their success at Metropolitan Junior College. The largest number who succeeded had attended public high schools in the junior college district. These students had the advantage of knowing more about their junior college before transferring to it, for the junior college carries on continuous liaison work with its district high schools. On the other hand, students from the upper middle class suburbs across the state line in Kansas, students from parochial high schools, and from private prep schools faced a different kind of adjustment. Most of them had expected to attend college away from home, their parents wanted them to, they could afford it. Now they had to come home and admit failure. Often it

was their parents who brought them to the college and arranged for their transfer. A third group of students had attended high schools all over the United States. Every large city junior college attracts some of these transient students. After flunking out of college, many of them came to Kansas City to get a job, heard about the junior college, and applied for admission. They were from large cities and small towns, from farms and ranches. Most of the students in this third group had to work while attending junior college. They were on their own. They faced numerous complications and adjustments.

4. Based upon a survey of the location of the family residence and occupation of the father for those students whose parents resided in the Metropolitan Kansas City area, it may be concluded that most of these students came from upper middle class or lower middle class homes. A few were from working class or wealthy homes, but none came from homes that could be identified at the poverty level. Only nine of the 162 students were Negroes. Undoubtedly the persistence of many of these students in college stemmed in part from the influence of middle class parents, who expected them to continue in college.

5. The curricula most frequently chosen by these students were pre-business, pre-education, liberal arts,

and secretarial science, in that order. For 43 of these students, this represented a change from engineering, pre-medicine, and science. Subjects taken first semester at Metropolitan Junior College were primarily in the areas of the humanities, social sciences, English composition and literature, psychology, business, speech, philosophy, and biology. Only 24 of the 162 students took a first semester course in physical science, mathematics, or foreign language. Many were repeating subjects. The subject most often repeated was English composition. Eighty--three per cent of these students stated that they were still working toward a four year degree.

6. Of the 162 students in this study, 87 had attended large state universities, 25 had attended state colleges, 41 had attended private institutions, and 9 had attended other public junior colleges. Seventy-five per cent had attended institutions in the Misscuri-Kansas area. Of the 59 who succeeded, 41 had attended the large state universities. This has several interpretations: (1) Those who first attended a private institution, state college, or public junior college often had as good a chance to succeed at the first institution as they did at Metropolitan Junior College. (2) A transfer from a state university to a junior college offered a favorable change in class size, instructional methods, and opportunities for

assistance from experienced instructors. (3) A survey of test scores and high school rank revealed that the state universities had enrolled a larger percentage of the best qualified students.

7. Their average age when they first enrolled at Metropolitan Junior College was 22 for those who succeeded, and 20 for those who failed. Most of those who succeeded did not come direct to the junior college after academic dismissal at the first institution. During an interim period, they had spent time in the military or in full time employment. For many of the students in this study, this "cooling off" period had a beneficial effect.

8. High school class rank was the best single indicator of those students most likely to succeed when given a second chance. In general, it may be said that the higher the student ranked in his high school graduating class, the greater his chance for success when given a second chance. Only five of the students in this study ranked in the upper ten percent of their high school graduating class. Four of the five succeeded. At the other extreme, there were eleven students who ranked in the lowest ten per cent of their high school graduating class. Only one of the eleven succeeded.

This was a man who had attended a private prep school which only enrolled students with superior academic potential. Chart II shows the relationship between high school rank and success at Metropolitan Junior College. The importance of high school rank lies in the fact that it gives some indication of a student's study habits and his ability to adapt to the requirements of a situation as well as his academic ability.

9. After these students had completed one semester at Metropolitan Junior College, the single best indicator of long range success was the first semester grade point average. All of the students who received a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or better made a 2.0 or better the first semester. Although there were a few students who made a 2.0 or better the first semester and then went down in subsequent semesters, the reverse was not true. This finding indicates the importance of helping the second chance student achieve success the first semester with implications for pre-admission counseling, careful program planning, and retention policies.

10. Since Metropolitan Junior College required no special entrance tests for these students, the test scores used in this study were those recorded for the senior year in high school. Scores most often reported were the Missouri College Placement Tests, SCAT, CEEB, ACT, ACE, and Ohio Psychological.

Thirty-three of these students showed a wide descreptancy between high school rank and test scores. The usual pattern was high test scores combined with low high school rank. This confirms the oft-quoted statement that "test scores can tell what a student can do, but they cannot tell what he will do." Motivation is an important factor. At the same time, this does not discount the importance of test scores. Used wisely, they can be an important aid in curriculum choice, academic advisement, and in the identification of the late bloomer. Used in combination with high school rank and other available information, they may also aid in the identification of those students who are not likely to succeed in any college. In this study, there were twelve students who had very low test scores, very low high school rank, and who had pursued non-college prep courses in high school. None of them succeeded at Metropolitan Junior College. It is doubtful that they should have been admitted. Several junior college authorities have stated that the junior college cannot provide higher education for the lowest 20 or 25 per cent of the high school population (Blocker, 1965).

11. Although all of these students enrolled the first semester in a program of full time studies, as time went on there was a gradual change from full time to part time and

finally to evening school status, or complete withdrawal. For over half of the students in this study, attendance at Metropolitan Junior College was a period during which they were slowly cooled out into the labor force or drafted into the Armed Forces. Fifty-five per cent of these students left at the end of the first semester. They left of their own accord. Failure finally got through to them.

12. Twenty-four of the students in this study had attended more than one college before transferring to Metropolitan Junior College. Not a single one succeeded. Some of these students did not give this information on their application for admissions. It was discovered upon examination of the transcript from the last college attended before transferring to Metropolitan Junior College. These students were on an academic merry-go-round. They were avoiding reality. They should not have been admitted unless there was evidence that they had changed in some significant way that would make college success possible.

13. Of the 59 students who succeeded at Metropolitan Junior College, 31 transferred to a four year college or university to complete a four year degree, 15 took full time jobs in private industry or business, 4 were drafted into the Armed Forces, 1 had a nervous breakdown and was undergoing psychiatric treatment at the time of the follow up, and 8 could not be located in the follow-up.

Of the 103 who did not succeed in their junior college studies, 10 transferred to still another college or university, 8 entered private business or trade schools, 42 took full time jobs in business or private industry, 30 were drafted into the Armed Forces, 1 went to Europe to study a foreign language, 1 became a non-student at Berkley, and 11 could not be located in the follow up.

In the spring of 1966, this writer noted that 18 of the original 162 students were still enrolled in the day school program at Metropolitan Junior College. They were invited to report for an interview. All of them responded. They seemed eager to talk. All of them were completing a third or fourth semester at junior college. Fourteen of the eighteen were successful students, four were still floundering. They presented a variety of backgrounds. Occupations of their fathers ranged from physician, lawyer, and business executive to carpenter and custodian. Only seven were still living with their parents. Four of the men were married. Their wives worked. Twelve of the eighteen students had part time jobs. Seven of the fourteen successful students had had an interim period of full time employment or military service before transferring to Metropolitan Junior College.

These students presented an array of problems that

could have influenced their personality development, behavior, or outlook. Five grew up in homes where both parents worked. Four grew up in broken homes which were the result of divorce. One man's father died when he was eleven, and he was reared by his mother and grandmother thereafter. Two had financial problems at the first college attended. One man's father had spent time in a mental institution. One woman had attended twenty-three different elementary and secondary schools. One man had accidentally shot and killed a small child when he was twelve and he had never gotten over it. At least six of the eighteen needed psychological help.

When these students were asked what they felt to be the cause of their failure at the first college, their answers were about the same. High school was too easy. It did not prepare them for college. When they went off to college, they had no realistic goals of what they wished to accomplish. They were too immature. They doubted if they would have done any better had they first attended a junior college. Many of them knew students who went direct from high school to a junior college, and they failed there too. A number of students said that a university dormatory is not a good place to live if you want to study. There are too many distractions, too many bull sessions, too many temptations to join a group who are "raising hell." Only two of the eighteen had ever seen a college

counselor. One expressed the opinion of many when he said, "Well, you are here to study and master your subjects. If you are having trouble with a subject, the instructor is the person to see. He is better able to help you than a counselor." Most of the successful students attributed their present success to the fact that they were now older, more mature, and knew what they wanted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Although this study was exploratory in nature and the results are inconclusive, it is an example of the kind of basic study that is required to determine student needs, it provides guidelines for planning new programs to meet these needs, and it gives a basis for evaluating results. First of all, it ought to be obvious that a special program of pre-admission counseling should be required of all second chance students before admission is granted. Each of these high risk students should be required to take a fresh battery of scholastic aptitude and achievement tests to determine his present strengths and weaknesses, his assets and liabilities. Some students may wish to take occupational interests tests, and in individual cases an oral intelligence test may be useful. Test results should be combined with the high school transcript, transcripts from any

other college attended, and the application for admission to form a background profile of each student which can then be used as a basis for pre-admission counseling.

Pre-admission counseling should be undertaken with these considerations: (1) It is important to determine whether or not a given student should enroll in the junior college or whether an interim experience in military service or full time employment is indicated. Not every second chance student is ready for a second chance. Timing is important. Furthermore, there may be some students for whom no further attendance in college is recommended. (2) The second chance student often needs discipline and needs help in developing self-discipline. Terms of admission and retention should be made clear to him, agreed to by him, and enforced by the college. (3) The number of semester hours an admitted student is permitted to carry should be individually determined in conference with the student. Some students should carry sixteen hours, some only three. Important factors are level of readiness, study habits, achievement record, scholastic ability, goals, and outside employment. (4) If the student has a deficiency in some basic skill, remediation should be undertaken the first semester. Otherwise the student should select subjects he feels he would like and in which he believes he will succeed. (5) Where

pressures from home appear to be detrimental to the best interest of a given student, a conference involving both parents and student may be required. (6) If the student is admitted, he should be given an opportunity to continue with individual counseling if he so desires. (7) A careful evaluation of progress should be made at the end of the first semester. Unless a student shows significant improvement over his record at the previous institution, he should not continue. (8) Periodic evaluations of the entire program for second chance students should be made to determine the degree of success that has been made in assisting these high risk students.

DISCUSSION

Although much discussion among junior college counselors focuses on the importance of career counseling, for most second chance students this is a secondary concern. In recent years, American society has determined that it has sufficient manpower and is rich enough as a nation to encourage the prolongation of youth. This trend has been going on for some time, and has led to a concomitant prolongation of career choice for many students. It is not unusual today to find students receiving bachelor's degrees still undecided about a career (Berry, 1966). Many are still undecided long

after they enter graduate school. This is the trend of the times, not only for university students but for all students. This trend is further encouraged by the fact that for many Americans the Protestant ethic of the value of work no longer applies. Universal higher education immediately after high school is thought by some to be the answer. But not every student at the age of eighteen is ready to spend four years or even two years in college. In some cases, college forces students to conform to a timetable that does not fit. Kenneth Keniston (Hall, 1968), who has been making a study of drop-outs in higher education, suggests that we ought to take a look at people who join the Peace Corps, or work, or spend two years before the mast, or discontinue their formal education completely. He asks, "Why should everyone go to college immediately after high school graduation?"

Ours is a society of rapid change, and many of the students that were the topic of this study got caught up in this rudderless situation. The problem of the second chance student is not likely to be career choice, even if he thinks it is. It is more probable that he does not understand himself, does not understand the rapidly changing world in which he lives, does not understand himself in relationship to this rapidly changing world, and therefore cannot find the right kind of role to play. Counseling the high risk student is not easy. The foundations

of personality are established early in life. The student is a product of his parents and the home environment they created and in which he was reared. The older an individual becomes the more deep rooted are his personal habits, and the harder it is for him to change. For maximum results, counseling the high risk student requires training at the doctorate level.

It is not uncommon at professional conventions to hear junior college student personnel workers describe new programs or new emphases in glowing terms. When someone in the audience finally asks, "What kind of evaluation have you made?" Or, "Is this program more effective than traditional ways of handling this problem?" The answers most often given are "Well, it is hard to evaluate a program like this?" "We asked the students how they felt about this program, and they felt it was helpful. The staff members who were involved felt it was helpful, too. That is really about all we could do." And one young man even ended with this ambiguous statement, "But I can tell you one thing, if this doesn't work, we'll try something else." When student personnel workers make statements like these, they are abdicating their responsibility. It is possible to evaluate special student personnel programs, and it is important to evaluate them. It is the evaluation

and feedback that gives the special student personnel program its momentum and sense of direction. Once it is determined what the goals of the junior college are in terms of increased learnings and changed behavior on the part of the student, then a special student personnel program is worthwhile to the extent that it makes a difference in helping the college achieve these goals. If a counseling program for second chance students helps more of them establish suitable goals, choose curricula that fit their individual needs, and succeed in such curricula, then it is worthwhile. If students do no better under the new program than they would have if left to their own resources, there is then a question of whether the expenditure for the special progarm is valid. Making an exploratory study of an on-going situation before establishing a new program provides an objective basis for both planning and evaluation. Brown and Mayhew (1965) called attention to the need for evaluation of counseling programs when they said, "So important is counseling for the junior colleges that at least one theorist, James L. Thornton, has listed the counseling function as one of the six basic purposes of the junior college. Now making an effort does not insure success. There is reason to suspect that counseling is not assisting the majority of college students. But the counseling movement

continues."

Another important benefit to be gained from the special counseling program that has its beginnings in an exploratory study is that it furnishes the professional counselor with the kind of raw material he needs to further his own education. There is little satisfaction in student personnel work if no one knows or cares about the end results. There is no satisfaction in counseling the second chance student if the counselor is not concerned with the outcome of his efforts. Exploratory studies not only provide a basis for scholarly planning and evaluation but also sensitize the counselor to the needs of individual students and therefore provide the motivation he needs to move ahead. What professional counselor could fail to learn something from a conversation like this:

Dr. Berry: You first attended a state university. You were there three semesters, then dismissed for academic reasons. This is your third semester here, and you are failing here too. How do you account for this?

Student: Well, that's easy. It is the same old story. I haven't diligently applied myself. I graduated from high school in the upper sixth of my class, and it was one of the best high schools in Kansas City. But high school was easy. I didn't study much. Then I went to the university and continued on the same way. It

just wasn't enough. That's all. Truthfully, I am bored to death with college. To take a full load of courses is just too much for me. If I could work, and take one or two courses at a time, it might not be so bad. Actually I was not ready to go to college when I started. I was too immmature and just not ready for it. I have been pushed around all of my life. As far back as I can remember, college has been hammered into me. Society hammers it into you. It is said that you can't get a good job without it. My parents never let up on me. Even when I was small, it was always said I would someday go to college. All through school every teacher said, "Go to college." "Go to college." Go to college." They never let up. I couldn't even enjoy some of my high school classes because the teachers reenforced their remarks with statements like this, "If you don't get this, you will not get through college." Or, "You can't get anywhere in life, if you don't go to college." I never could enjoy myself for all this push, push, push.

Dr. Berry: You were an only child. Could that be it? Did you have things too easy?

Student: Oh, I had things easy all right. Not in the money sense, but I got everything else. My mother always made things easy for me. She took my side. She even came to the junior

college to get me admitted, and she got me reinstated when they dropped me. I would have just as soon have been dropped but she wouldn't let me.

Dr. Berry: What do you expect to be doing ten years from now?

Student: Well, I have a sort of green thumb for business, but it won't be business. I am bored to death with business. I wouldn't have taken the business courses this semester, but one of the counselors suggested it. My major interest is writing. More than anything else in the world I would like to be a writer. I am not coming to junior college next year. I want to spend a year in Europe and study a foreign language. I think I will like it better in Europe. For one thing, you may have to study harder, but they don't make you go. You don't have to go to college in Europe.

Each year junior colleges all over the United States open their doors to an increasing number of university and senior college flunk-outs; but in too many cases, the open door is a revolving door. At the same time a review of the literature on junior college education finds scant mention of this important salvage function. While some of these unsuccessful students have somehow "found themselves," there are many more

for whom the junior college is nothing more than a repetition of their previous experience. Such students are caught in the "college trap." What degree of responsibility do the universities and four year colleges have in the dismissal of these unsuccessful students? What degree of responsibility must the junior college assume for providing them a second chance or helping them choose alternate goals? Do junior colleges have counselors who possess the educational background and training necessary to work with these high risk students and perhaps make a significant difference in their lives? The exploratory study which formed the basis of this discussion is only a start. Additional research is needed.

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CHART I

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TYPES OF HIGH SCHOOLS ATTENDED AND SUCCESS AT METROPOLITAN JUNIOR COLLEGE, KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI FOR 162 TRANSFER STUDENTS WHO FIRST ATTENDED OTHER INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION BUT WERE DISMISSED FOR FAILURE TO MAINTAIN A SATISFACTORY GRADE POINT AVERAGE

Type of high school attended	Number graduating from this type high school	Number making a 2.0 or better GPA at junior college	Percent
Public high schools in the junior college district	69	31	45
Suburban high schools on the Kansas side (Upper middle class districts)	23	7	30
Parochial high schools in Metropolitan Kansas City area	17	4	24
Private prep schools	3	1	33
Qualified through GED	3	0	0
High schools outside of Metropolitan Kansas City area, and from all parts of the United States.	47	16	34
TOTAL	162	59	36

CHART II

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACADEMIC SUCCESS AT METROPOLITAN JUNIOR COLLEGE AND HIGH SCHOOL RANK FOR 162 TRANSFER STUDENTS WHO HAD FIRST ATTENDED OTHER INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION BUT WERE DISMISSED FOR FAILURE TO MAINTAIN A SATISFACTORY GRADE POINT AVERAGE*

High School Class Rank	Number	Percent	2.0 or Better GPA		Less than 2.0 GPA	
			Number	Percent	Number	Percent
UPPER THIRD	31	19.1	18	58	13	42
MIDDLE THIRD	64	39.5	25	39	39	61
LOWER THIRD	58	35.8	14	24	44	76
QUALIFIED THROUGH GED	3	1.9	0	0	3	100
NO HS RANK AVAILABLE	6	3.7	2	33	4	67
TOTAL	162	100.0	59	36	103	64

* For the purposes of comparison in this chart, the criterion for success at Metropolitan Junior College is the cumulative grade point average. A 2.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale is a C average. (A=4.0, B=3.0, C=2.0, D=1.0, and F=0.)

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